

November 23 Answers

- 1) Paul's second missionary journey. God's method of leading Paul and Silas was fascinating: "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been **forbidden** by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not **allow** them" (Acts 16:6–7). Then they saw a vision of a man of Macedonia, yet when they got to Philippi, they met a group of **women**! This teaches us several important things about God's leadership. First, when Paul started his journey, he had no idea he would end up in Corinth. He got there by a series of choices and events in which God guided him one **step** at a time. This teaches us that God leads us step-by-step, and even if we know the ultimate destination (as the Israelites did when they left Egypt), God often leads us by the path **less** traveled (cf. Num 9:15–23). Second, Paul didn't panic when God kept him from preaching in Asia. He simply **yielded** to the guidance of the Spirit and made plans to go into Bithynia. This teaches us that there's nothing wrong with taking the **initiative** and going in a direction we believe is prudent. If it isn't God's will, He is more than capable of shutting the door. We should take comfort in this, for it allows us to **relax** into God's guidance and not be fearful that we're making a mistake. Third, when the Holy Spirit kept Paul from going into Bithynia, he didn't throw up his hands in despair. Instead, he passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. This teaches us to expect course **corrections** as we follow God's leadership. There may be times when we try to go in several different directions and God shuts the door on all of them. That may mean that we need to **wait** for God's timing, or it may mean that God wants us to meet a Lydia in Philippi! Whatever the case, we can rest in knowing that God will help us reach the right destination. Fourth, Paul no doubt expected to meet the man from his vision, but when he met the women by the river, he didn't allow this to keep him from sharing Jesus. This teaches us to take **advantage** of every opportunity and manage our **expectations** about ministry, because we may end up doing something very different than what we thought!